

‘SALAMELICA’: NEW THOUGHTS ON VOLPINO AND HIS ARIA IN ACT III OF *LO SPEZIALE*

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Recently, as I was doing research for a project on eighteenth-century dances, I came across the following entry in Charles Compan’s *Dictionnaire de danse* (1787):

Salamalec. Salut à la Turquie, qui signifie, *Dieu vous garde*. On s’est servi longtems à Paris de cette expression, pour saluer une personne en buvant à sa santé. *Salamalec*, ou, comme prononcent les Turcs, *Selamalec*, n’est pas seulement une salutation des Turcs, mais encore des Arabes, & même de tous les peuples Mahométans.¹

Salamalec. Turkish greeting meaning ‘May God keep you’. This expression has long been used in Paris as a toast when drinking to someone’s health. ‘Salamalec’, or as the Turks pronounce it, ‘Selamalec’, is not only a greeting of the Turks, but of Arabs and even of all Muslim peoples.

This entry reminded me of ‘salamelica’, the first word of Volpino’s aria in Act 3 of Carlo Goldoni’s libretto *Lo speziale* (The Apothecary), which Joseph Haydn set for the opening of the opera house at Eszterháza in 1768. Volpino’s short aria is one of the most widely discussed numbers in Haydn’s operatic output, yet the significance of Volpino’s very first utterance in it has yet to be considered closely. As the first in a string of only loosely related short phrases, the expression might seem initially to be a nonsense construction or neologism. Indeed, both Matthew Head and Caryl Clark qualify it simply as ‘Italian-derived gibberish, standing in for Turkish’ or ‘Italianized gibberish’, although Clark translates it consistently as ‘Salaam’, and Larry Wolff characterizes it as ‘a Muslim greeting (“*salam-aleykum*”)’ or as ‘Italianized Arabic’.² These explanations, however, do not account for the intercultural valences of the expression in the eighteenth century, as attested by

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- 1 Charles Compan, *Dictionnaire de danse: contenant l’histoire, les règles & les principes de cet art, avec des réflexions critiques, & des anecdotes curieuses concernant la dance ancienne et moderne; le tout tiré des meilleurs auteurs qui ont écrit sur cet art* (Paris: Cailleau, 1787), 337–338. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own, and I have retained original orthography in quoted material. Compan’s assertion that ‘salamalec’ was a toast suggests that this expression may have been used mockingly, since Muslims are generally forbidden to drink alcohol.
- 2 Matthew Head, ‘Haydn’s Exoticisms: “Difference” and the Enlightenment’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn*, ed. Caryl Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 77; Caryl Clark, *Haydn’s Jews: Representation and Reception on the Operatic Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 135; Caryl Clark, ‘Haydn’s Judaizing of the Apothecary’, *Studia Musicologica* 51/1–2 (2009), 56; Caryl Clark, ‘Encountering “Others” in Haydn’s *Lo speziale* (1768)’, in *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre*, volume 2: *The Time of Joseph Haydn: From Sultan Mahmud I to Mahmud II (r. 1730–1839)*, ed. Michael Hüttler and Hans Ernst Weidinger (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2014), 293; Caryl Clark, ‘Joseph Haydn’s Judaizing of the Apothecary – Take 2’, in *Opera in a Multicultural World: Coloniality, Culture, Performance*, ed. Mary I. Ingraham, Joseph K. So and Roy Moodley (New York: Routledge, 2016), 115; and Larry Wolff, *The Singing Turk: Ottoman Power and Operatic Emotions on the European Stage from the Siege of Vienna to the Age of Napoleon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 132 and 131 respectively.



Compan's definition of it, nor for its potential resonances for Haydn's audience at Eszterháza.³ Against the backdrop of the substantial literature on Volpino and his aria, in this essay I explore the uses and meanings of expressions related to 'salamelica' in the eighteenth century, and I suggest that Volpino's exclamation adds a further layer of complexity to his character. Despite the apothecary Sempronio's fascination with news from around the world, I contend that he is duped not only by his lack of worldliness, but by his ignorance of the cultural, theatrical and operatic conventions of Europe itself, the very conventions Volpino's aria evokes and with which Haydn's original audience would have been familiar.

THE LITTLE FOX

In *Lo speciale*, which Haydn set in a shortened and simplified version for the opening of the new theatre, Volpino – literally, the 'little fox' – is an aptly named character.⁴ Haydn's comic opera features only a handful of the stock character-types familiar from the *commedia dell'arte*, who interact in often predictable ways: the apothecary Sempronio, his assistant Mengone and the dandy Volpino, each of whom wants to marry Sempronio's ward Grilletta. Although he is ultimately unsuccessful, Volpino lives up to his name and tries to best his rivals through cunning, trickery and deceit. In Act 2 he impersonates a notary in order to inscribe his own name into the marriage contract Sempronio dictates to him. When this ploy fails, he returns in Act 3 to give Sempronio a note requesting an Italian apothecary to help fight an outbreak of the plague in Turkey, which Sempronio had read about aloud from his newspaper at the beginning of the opera. Volpino then reappears disguised as a Turkish envoy to accompany Sempronio on his journey and to request Grilletta's hand in marriage; Sempronio is now happy to comply, eager only for the riches that await him in Turkey. As they prepare to depart, Volpino sings the following short aria, set to one of the few surviving passages of music Haydn composed for Act 3:

Salamelica
Semprugna cara,
Constantinupela
Sempre cantara
Sempre ballara
Là, Là, Là, Là.⁵

Salaam
Sempronio dear,
Constantinople
Always to sing
Always to dance
Là, Là, Là, Là.

3 Based on the number of librettos printed for the premiere of *Lo speciale*, guests numbered approximately three hundred, in addition to Prince and Princess Esterházy and Archduchess Marie Christine (a daughter of Empress Maria Theresa) and her husband Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen, who lived a short distance from Eszterháza at Halbturn Castle. See Rebecca Lee Green, *Power and Patriarchy in Haydn's Goldoni Operas* (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1995), especially 53 and 135.

4 Goldoni wrote the libretto in 1752 for Bologna's carnival, and it was set by Domenico Fischietti and Vincenzo Pallavicini in 1754 and performed at Venice's carnival in 1755. Goldoni's original version as well as Fischietti and Pallavicini's setting of it are more complicated than the version set by Haydn – they include more characters (both *parti serie* and *parti buffe*) as well as a lengthier and more intricate plot. Haydn's version was probably prepared by Carl Friberth, who also premiered the role of Sempronio. For further discussion of the genesis of the libretto and Haydn's setting of it see Peter Branscombe, 'Speziale, Lo (ii)', in *Grove Music Online* www.oxfordmusiconline.com (17 January 2019); H. C. Robbins Landon, 'Joseph Haydn: *Lo speciale*, Foreword to the Facsimile of the Printed Libretto', *Haydn Yearbook* 21 (1997), 1; Joseph Haydn, *Lo speciale*, ed. Helmut Wirth (Munich: G. Henle, 1959), vii–viii; and Green, *Power and Patriarchy*, 130–132.

5 As given in the libretto printed for the premiere of *Lo speciale* at Eszterháza and reproduced in facsimile in Landon, 'Joseph Haydn: *Lo speciale*', 1. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of the libretto of *Lo speciale* are from this source. For details about the printed libretto as well as Haydn's autograph score – from which large portions of Act 3 are missing – see Green, *Power and Patriarchy*, 103–104.



The libretto printed for the premiere of Haydn’s opera indicates that at this point, Volpino is dressed in Turkish costume and accompanied by a retinue of other *faux* Turks (‘Sempronio, e Volpino vestito alla turca con finti Turchi’). Unfortunately for Volpino and unbeknownst to him, Mengone copies his disguise, and Sempronio marries Grilletta to him instead of to Volpino, presumably believing the two ‘Turks’ are the same person. At least when *Lo speziale* was revived at Eszterháza in 1774 and possibly when it was premiered there as well, both Volpino and Mengone’s costumes were red and included caps and cummerbunds, and the libretto makes it clear that they also sported moustaches.⁶

Although Volpino dresses up as a Turk and refers to Constantinople, several scholars have noted that aspects of both the text he sings and the music to which it is set complicate the identity he projects. Head has observed that the aria’s duple metre, rebounding melodic thirds and harmonic retrogression from V to IV bring to mind the *törökös*, a parodic dance performed in Turkish costume to music most likely played by Roma (‘Gypsy’) musicians at weddings in central Hungary beginning during the Ottoman occupation (1526–1699). Head, like Bence Szabolcsi before him, identifies the *törökös* as an important source of the *alla turca* style of eighteenth-century European music, of which Volpino’s aria is an early example.⁷ Clark has also found significance in the vocables ‘dadl, dadl, dadl, dadl’ that appear in Haydn’s autograph of the aria, replacing Goldoni’s original ‘là, là, là, là’, syllables that were also retained in the printed libretto for Eszterháza. Clark proposes that ‘here the blending of ethnic otherness embraces that of Jewish vocality, for this noodling nonsense vocable bears a striking resemblance to the “deidl deidl” refrain concluding many a Hasidic tune or *niggun*’.⁸

My purpose in summarizing existing scholarship is neither to support nor to refute specific readings of Volpino, but to highlight how the text and music of this aria have engendered varying interpretations of this character. The most neutral reading of this passage is that it confirms Volpino’s fox-like nature while heightening the spectacle of operatic performance through visual and aural exoticism. The aria, furthermore, is typical of the *alla turca* style of the late eighteenth century in that it suggests what Mary Hunter has called a ‘classically Orientalizing blurring of boundaries among different sorts of Others’.⁹ Neither Goldoni’s original libretto nor the version set by Haydn provides any information about Volpino beyond his name, and there is no reason to think he is not Italian, especially within the context of an opera set in Italy.¹⁰ However, a close consideration of Volpino’s very first utterance – ‘salamelica’ – suggests that this Italian man may have assimilated more than Turkish, Hungarian, Roma and/or Jewish idioms into his discursive persona.

6 See Günter Thomas and Georg Feder, ‘Dokumente zur Ausstattung von *Lo speziale*, *L’infedeltà delusa*, *La fedeltà premiata*, *Armida* und anderen Opern Haydns’, *Haydn-Studien* 6/2 (1988), 102: ‘Zwey rothe Türcken Kleyder samt Kappen, und Bünden’, according to a 1775 inventory of costumes and props for the Eszterháza stage. Thomas and Feder explain that ‘Bünden’ are ‘Leibbinden’. When Volpino realizes that Sempronio has married Grilletta to Mengone, he exclaims: ‘E tai baffi, e vestiti mando al Diavolo’.

7 Matthew Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart’s Turkish Music* (London: Royal Musical Association, 2000), 67–70; Head, ‘Haydn’s Exoticisms’, 78–79; and Bence Szabolcsi, ‘Exoticisms in Mozart’, *Music and Letters* 37/4 (1956), 329–330.

8 Clark, ‘Haydn’s Judaizing of the Apothecary’, 59. See also Clark, ‘Encountering “Others”’, 296; and Clark, ‘Joseph Haydn’s Judaizing of the Apothecary’, 115–116. Some of Clark’s interpretations have been disputed – see, for instance, Jeanne Swack’s and Bruce Alan Brown’s reviews of her book *Haydn’s Jews* (*Musica Judaica Online Reviews* (26 July 2010) <https://mjoreviews.org/tag/jeanne-swack/> (7 August 2019) and *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34/4 (2011), 565–566 respectively).

9 Mary Hunter, ‘The *Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio’, in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 53.

10 Based on the 1775 inventory of costumes and props for the Eszterháza stage, Volpino – when not impersonating a notary or a Turkish envoy – wore a light blue three-piece suit embellished with gold and silver, suggesting status and wealth. See Thomas and Feder, ‘Dokumente zur Ausstattung von *Lo speziale*’, 90 and 102.



'SALAMELICA' IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SOURCES

Perhaps because he was from Venice, with its history of trade and conflict with the Ottoman empire, Goldoni had a long-standing interest in writing plays and librettos with Eastern themes and settings, including *Lugrezia romana in Costantinopoli* (Lucretia of Rome in Constantinople, 1737); the trilogy *La sposa persiana* (The Persian Wife, 1753), *Ircana in Julfa* (Ircana in Jaffa, uncertain date) and *Ircana in Ispahan* (Ircana in Isfahan, uncertain date); *La Dalmatina* (The Dalmatian Woman, 1758); and *L'impresario delle Smirne* (The Impresario from Smyrna, 1759).¹¹ Yet a search of Goldoni's librettos reveals, other than Volpino's exclamation (which Goldoni spelled 'salamelicca'), only two related expressions: 'salamelech' in *Lugrezia romana in Costantinopoli* and 'salamelech' in *La conversazione* (The Conversation, 1758).¹² Similarly, searches – including a full-text search of the *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* database, encompassing over 180,000 books, pamphlets, essays and broadsides – for terms similar to 'salamelic(c)a' return relatively few additional sources, which are detailed in Table 1.

Although this listing is surely not exhaustive, it reveals a trend not evident from a consideration of Goldoni's librettos alone, namely that expressions related to 'salamelica' are most common in French contexts. In contrast to Goldoni's librettos, in which such exclamations are used exclusively by Turks (*Lugrezia romana in Costantinopoli*) or characters disguised as Turks (*La conversazione* and *Lo speciale*), only five additional sources (numbered 1, 8, 11, 13 and 16 in Table 1) – two of which (sources 1 and 11) recount the same story – involve a Turk (or Middle Easterner or North African) or a character impersonating one. With the exceptions of source 10, in which a 'salamalec' is described as 'a fancy dish, or tureen', and source 18, which provides no definition of 'salamalec' but simply gives its Spanish translation, the other sources involve non-Turks using variants of 'salamelica' in the same way Turks and pseudo-Turks do in Goldoni's librettos and in sources 1, 8, 11, 13 and 16: as a greeting or an expression of respect, sometimes satirical.¹³ Moreover, most instances of expressions related to 'salamelica' occur in French sources (most commonly spelled 'salamalec') and/or are pronounced by French characters. Although source 1 (from 1719) explains explicitly that a 'salamalec' is a Turkish greeting, source 15 (from 1787) implicitly suggests that this expression had become naturalized during the intervening years, describing a 'salamalec' as a custom of Normandy.¹⁴ Indeed, two sources are presented explicitly as being about French society and manners (sources 15 and 19), and three others are directed at readers who wish to increase their comprehension or perfect their knowledge of the French language (sources 1, 3 and 14).

Compan's dictionary of dance, which I cited at the beginning of this essay, further corroborates the well-established use of the expression 'salamalec' in France by the second half of the eighteenth century, and the *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* traces its adoption into the French language to 1659:

Salamalec n. m. est emprunté à l'arabe *as-salam* 'alayk, formule de salutation signifiant 'paix sur toi'. Introduit avec le sens de 'salut à la turque, grande révérence' (on relève aussi l'ancien provençal *çalamalec* 'salut arabe'), le mot est employé à partir du XVII^e s. (1659) avec une connotation péjorative et n'a conservé que le sens familier, surtout au pluriel, de 'révérences, politesses exagérées' (*faire des salamalecs*). On rencontre la graphie *salamalek* chez Nerval et, en français

¹¹ This list is based in part on Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, 129.

¹² See Carlo Goldoni: *Drammi per musica* (Università di Padova) <http://www.carlogoldoni.it/public/lessico/lessico/lettera/s> (7 August 2019).

¹³ The tone of source 5 is one of mockery and of sexual *double entendre*.

¹⁴ The inclusion of 'salamalec' (and its definition as a 'salutation des Turcs, des Arabes, & de tous les Mahométans prise des Syriaques') in the revised 1727 edition of Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel* is also suggestive of this trend; no entry for this term appears in the original 1690 edition. The term is also absent from another late seventeenth-century reference work, P[ierre] Richelet's *Dictionnaire françois: contenant les mots et les choses, plusieurs nouvelles remarques sur la langue françoise* (Geneva: Widerhold, 1680).

Table 1 Eighteenth-century sources containing variants of ‘salamelica’ (ordered by date of publication; original orthography retained and pagination given in parentheses)

Source	Expression	Context
1) Charles Rivière Dufresny, <i>Amusemens sérieux et comiques; ou nouveau recueil de bons-mots, de railleries fines, de pensées ingénieuses & délicates, de bons contes, & d'avantures plaisantes; à l'usage de ceux qui veulent aprendre le françois, ou l'anglois</i> (The Hague: chez Isaac Vaillant, 1719) [parallel text in French and in English; a separate English-only edition was also published in the same year]	• Salamalec	• ‘The salamalec of Lyons, or the Turkisk [<i>sic</i>] salutation’ is a story about a Turkish ambassador passing through Lyons. The magistrates of the city bring a converted Turk with them to greet the ambassador, who does not believe a Muslim would convert to Christianity. As proof that he was born Muslim, the ambassador asks the convert to show him that he is circumcised. The magistrates misunderstand the situation and display themselves as well, to the horror of the ambassador. A footnote in the French text specifies that a ‘salamalec’ is a Turkish greeting (‘Salamalec, en Turc, veut dire un salut’) (198–201).
2) Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, <i>Oeuvres diverses de Mr. Rousseau</i> , volume 2 (London: Jacob Tonson & Jean Watts, 1723)	• Salamalec	• In a short piece in praise of Greek and Latin authors titled ‘Vaudeville’, the narrator invites lowly writers to pay respect to their leaders with ‘salamalecs’ to them (‘Ecrivains du bas étage venez en bref, pour faire devant l’image de votre chef, cinq ou six salamalecs. Vivent les Grecs!’) (99–100). • The author defines a ‘salamalec’ as a Turkish greeting that has long been used in Paris as a toast (582).
3) Philibert-Joseph Le Roux, <i>Dictionnaire comique, satyrique, critique, burlesque, libre & proverbial. Avec une explication très-fidèle de toutes les manieres de parler burlesques, comiques, libres, satyriques, critiques & proverbiales, qui peuvent se rencontrer dans les meilleurs auteurs, tant anciens que modernes. Le tout pour faciliter aux étrangers, & aux François mêmes, l’intelligence de toutes sortes de livres</i> (Lyons: chez les Héritiers de Beringos Freres, 1735) [several other editions exist as well]	• Salamalec	
4) Carlo Goldoni, libretto of <i>Lugrezia romana in Costantinopoli</i> (Venice: Alvisè Valvasense, 1737)	• Salamelech	• In Act 1 Scene 3 Ruscamar, the guard of the harem, greets Albumazar, the Ottoman sultan, with ‘salamelech’, to which Albumazar immediately responds ‘speak Italian’, for the benefit of

continued

Table 1 continued

Source	Expression	Context
5) Mr. L. C. M*****, <i>Varsovie ridicule & autres pièces nouvelles</i> (possibly Amsterdam, 1740)	• Salamalec	Mirmicaina, the Venetian slave whom Albumazar intends to wed, who is present (10). • An elderly man compares the stages of life to three instruments: the flute, the theorbo and the organ. With respect to the theorbo, he notes that without a skilful hand, it will mock one with a ‘salamalec’ (‘sans une main habile, il vous fait un salamalec’) (87–92).
6) [André Joseph Panckoucke,] <i>Dictionnaire portatif des proverbes françois, et des façons de parler comiques, burlesques, et familières. Avec une explication des étymologies les plus averées, tirées des meilleurs auteurs</i> (Paris: chez Savoye, 1748) [several subsequent editions exist as well]	• Salamalec	• The author defines a ‘salamalec’ as a Turkish greeting that has long been used as a toast in French (363). (The definition is very similar to the one in source 3 above.)
7) Carlo Goldoni, libretto of <i>Lo speziale</i> (Venice: Modesto Fenzo, 1754)	• Salamelicca	• In Act 3 Scene 6 Volpino disguises himself as a Turk in order to trick Sempronio into marrying Grilletta to him. He greets Sempronio with ‘salamelicca’ (46). • A ‘salamalec’ is described as an ‘ordinary salutation’ (113).
8) Frederik Ludvig Norden, <i>Travels in Egypt and Nubia. Translated from the Original and Enlarged with Observations from Ancient and Modern Authhors, that Have Written on the Antiquities of Egypt, by Dr. Peter Templeman</i> , volume 2 (London: printed for Lockyer Davis and Charles Reymers, 1757) [translation of Frédéric Louis Norden, <i>Voyage d’Egypte et de Nubie</i> (Copenhagen: Imprimerie de la Maison royale des orphelins, 1755)]	• Salamaleck	
9) Carlo Goldoni, libretto of <i>La conversazione</i> (Venice: Modesto Fenzo, 1758)	• Salamelecch	• In Act 3 Scene 3 Lucrezia, a spirited young woman, uses the expression ‘salamelecch’ when she announces she will attend a masked ball in Turkish disguise (‘Salamelecch, stara sultana’) (42).
10) Menon, <i>The Professed Cook: or The Modern Art of Cookery, Pastry, and Confectionary, Made Plain and Easy. Consisting of the Most Approved Methods in the French as well as English Cookery</i> , second edition, volume 1 (London: printed for R. Davis and T. Caslon, 1769),	• Salamalec	• A ‘salamalec’ is described as ‘a fancy dish, or tureen’, consisting of beef, mutton, partridges, rabbit, sausages, ham, onions, carrots, parsnips, herbs, salt, and pepper. The same recipe for ‘salamalec’

and third edition (London: W. Davis, T. Caslon, G. Robinson, F. Newbery, and the author, 1776) [an edition and translation of Menon’s *Les Soupers de la cour* (Paris: Guillyn, 1755) by B. Clermont, with additional recipes]

11) M. de Grécourt, *Œuvres diverses de M. de Grécourt*, volume 2 (probably Paris, 1780) • Salamalec

12) M. de Grécourt, *Œuvres diverses de M. de Grécourt*, volume 3 (probably Paris, 1780) • Salamalec

13) [Giuseppe Palomba,] libretto of *L'albergatrice vivace*, A Comic Opera, As Performed at the King’s Theatre, in the Haymarket, under the Direction of Signor Anfossi (London: H. Reynell, 1783) [first performed in Venice, 1780] • Salamelech (Italian text)/ Salamelek (parallel English translation)

14) Elisabeth Cacaoult de la Mimardière, *Etrennes aux dames: ou, recueil de pièces choisies, en vers, tirées des meilleurs auteurs français; avec quelques lettres en vers & en prose; précédées du joli voyage de Bachaumont & LaChapelle* (London: Galabin, 1787) • Salamelec

15) Anonymous, *Correspondance secrete, politique & littéraire, ou mémoires pour servir à l’histoire des cours, des sociétés & de la littérature en France, depuis la mort de Louis XV*, volume 10 (possibly Paris, 1787) • Salamalec

16) Constantin-François Volney, *Travels through Syria and Egypt, in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785. Containing the Present Natural and Political State of Those Countries, Their Productions, Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce; with Observations on the Manners, Customs, and Government of the Turks and Arabs. Translated from the French*, volume 2 (London: printed for G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1787) [a translation of Constantin-François Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en*

appears in both editions of this cookbook (184 in the second edition; 189 in the third edition).

• ‘Le salamalec lyonnais’ recounts the same story as in source 1 above (6–8).

• Madame Orry describes in a letter the respects paid to a young female intendant (‘jeune intendante’) in Tours as ‘salamalecs’ (‘Complimens faits, voila tout le beau sexe qui vient en foule faire salamalec’) (131–137).

• In Act 1 Scene 8 Monsieur Floran, a Frenchman, impersonates Barberina’s Turkish brother in order to scare away one of his rivals, Micheluccio, a young Calabrian man who loves and is loved by Barberina. Floran addresses the assembled company with ‘Al billà Salamelech/Salamelek’ (34–35).

• Bachaumont and LaChapelle encounter an old man in Encosse who reminds them of a Greek bishop and who greets them with a ‘salamelec’ (‘faisant le salamelec’) (22–23).

• The author recounts a story in which the protagonist goes to give advice to his cousin, who has just inherited a fortune; he greets his cousin with a ‘salamalec’, according to the custom of Normandy (‘Dès que j’ai su que le drôle étoit devenu riche, j’ai été lui faire la salamalec, suivant la coutume de Normandie’) (86–87).

• In this English translation of Volney’s original French travelogue, the derivation of ‘salamalek’ is explained as being from ‘the salute *Salam-alaïk*, health to thee’ (400). (The French version reads: ‘de là notre mot *salamalèque*’.)

continued

Table 1 continued

Source	Expression	Context
Égypte, pendant les années 1783, 1784, & 1785 (Paris: chez Volland et chez Desenne, 1787)]		
17) Charles Compan, <i>Dictionnaire de danse: contenant l'histoire, les règles & les principes de cet art, avec des réflexions critiques, & des anecdotes curieuses concernant la danse ancienne et moderne; le tout tiré des meilleurs auteurs qui ont écrit sur cet art</i> (Paris: Cailleau, 1787)	• Salamalec	• The author defines a 'salamalec' as a Turkish greeting that has long been used in Paris as a toast (337–338). (The definition uses much of the same wording as in sources 3 and 6 above.)
18) Antonio Vieyra, <i>Brevis, clara, facilis ac jucunda, non solum Arabicam linguam; sed etiam hodiernam Persicam, cui tota ferè Arabica intermixta est, addiscendi methodus</i> (Dublin: L. White, 1788)	• Salamalec	• The entry for 'salamalec' indicates only that it is equivalent to the Spanish 'zalema' (377). 'Zalema' itself appears in only one other source in <i>Eighteenth-Century Collections Online</i> : an annotated edition of Cervantes's <i>Don Quixote</i> published in 1781. The sixth volume of the Spanish <i>Diccionario de Autoridades</i> defines this Spanish term as 'reverence, or humble courtesy [given] to demonstrate submission. Taken from the Arabic word <i>Zalemaq</i> , with which the Moors greet one another' ('La reverencia, ò cortesia humilde en demostracion de sumisión. Tómake de la voz Arábiga <i>Zalemaq</i> , con que se saludan los Moros'). <i>Diccionario de la lengua castellana: en que se explica el verdadero sentido de las voces, su naturaleza y calidad, con las frases o modos de hablar, los proverbios o refranes, y otras cosas convenientes al uso de la lengua</i> (Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Academia Española: por los herederos de Francisco de el Hierro, 1739), 551. Also available online at http://web.frl.es/DA.html (6 September 2019).
19) Louis Antoine Caraccioli, <i>Letters on the Manners of the French, and on the Follies and Extravagancies of the Times. Written by an Indian at Paris</i> , volume 1 (London: printed for G. G. J. and J. Robinson and W. Keymer, 1790) [translated, with introduction, by Charles Shillito from Caraccioli, <i>Lettres d'un Indien à Paris, à son ami Glazir, sur les moeurs françoises, & sur les bizzareries du tems</i> (Amsterdam; Paris: chez Briand, 1789)]	• Salamalec	• Opening of Letter XLII: 'To Glazir [the dedicatee of all the letters]. Salamalec to thy daughter' (255).



d’Afrique, la forme empruntée *salamalekoum*, formule de salutation équivalente à ‘la paix soit avec vous (pluriel)’.¹⁵

Salamalec (masculine noun) is borrowed from the Arabic *as-salam ‘alayk*, a greeting that means ‘peace be with you [informal singular]’. Introduced [into French] with the sense of ‘Turkish greeting, great reverence’ (one also finds the old provençal *çalamalec* ‘Arab greeting’), the word is used from the seventeenth century (1659) with a pejorative connotation and has only preserved the colloquial meaning, especially in the plural, of ‘exaggerated bows and politenesses’ (*faire des salamalecs*). In Nerval’s works, one encounters the spelling *salamalek* and, in African French, the borrowed form *salamalekoum*, a greeting equivalent to ‘peace be with you (plural)’.

Conversely, although the encyclopedic *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* includes entries for the verb ‘salameleccare (salamaleccare)’ and the nouns ‘salamelècca’ and ‘salamelècco (salamalècco, salamelech, salemelèc, salemelècche)’, which it defines as ‘greeting, homage, regards’ (‘saluto, omaggio, ossequio’) in accordance with the meaning of the Arabic *sala’m alayk* (‘pace a te’ – peace be with you (singular)), it does not suggest that these expressions have ever commonly been used in Italian.¹⁶ Instead, the entries identify isolated occurrences of these words in a variety of sources ranging over several centuries, highlighting their very limited role in Italian, especially as compared to the evidence of the much more common use of ‘salamalec’ in French. The French assimilation of this term may bear witness to the cordial relations and alliances between the French and Ottomans extending back to the early sixteenth century.¹⁷

POSSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS AND RESONANCES AT ESZTERHÁZA

Goldoni’s grasp of French was idiomatic, if ungrammatical, even before he settled in Paris in 1762,¹⁸ and presumably the use of ‘salamalec’ in French was known to him as he penned the libretto of *Lo speziale*. Volpino’s utterance of the expression in an Italianized form (matching the language of the opera’s libretto and the five-syllable lines of his aria, in which stress falls on the penultimate syllable of each line) may suggest this character’s acquaintance with and adoption of French speech and customs, perhaps in an effort to increase his appeal to women.¹⁹ Indeed, French men are characterized in librettos roughly contemporary with *Lo speziale* as appealing, flirtatious or womanizing, shedding light on popular stereotypes. In Act 1 Scene 1 of Goldoni’s *La conversazione* (Table 1, source 9), for example, Giacinto, whose travels have taken him throughout the world, declares:

15 Alain Rey, general ed., *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1994), volume 2, 1865. I have found an earlier French musical source in which the term ‘salamalec’ appears in a multilingual nonsense song: ‘L’air du juif errant’ (incipit: ‘Salamalec Ô Rocoha’) from Etienne Moulinié’s (c1600–after 1669) burlesque *ballet de cour Le mariage de Pierre de Provence avec la belle Maguelonne*, which was performed in Tours in 1638. As Vincent Dumestre has noted, this air mixes so many languages – Latin, English, French, German, Arabic, Italian and Flemish – that it is incomprehensible, a parody of the mythical Wandering Jew in search of an identity and a homeland. See Vincent Dumestre, liner notes to Etienne Moulinié, *L’humaine comédie*, performed by Le Poème Harmonique, directed by Vincent Dumestre (Alpha 005, 1999).

16 Salvatore Battaglia, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* (Turin: Unione Tipografico, 1994), volume 17, 375, column 2.

17 For more on the history of Franco-Ottoman relations see Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, chapter 2.

18 See Jessica Goodman, *Goldoni in Paris: la gloire et le malentendu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), esp. 142, 148–149, 152, and 163.

19 Volpino’s aria in Act 2 Scene 1, in which he tells Sempronio ‘a charming story [that] has come from France’, possibly further suggests his familiarity with that country, both through its text and its music, which evokes a minuet topic. Volpino’s explicit allusion to France as the source of his story is particularly conspicuous as it is the only Western European nation – other than Italy, where the action takes place – to figure in a libretto replete with references to foreign lands: the Molucca Islands, China, Cephalonia, Persia, Babylon, Turkey, India, Tartary and Mongolia.



In quattordici lingue	In fourteen languages
parlo, scrivo e traduco.	I speak, write and translate.
So i riti, so i costumi	I know the rituals, I know the customs
dei popoli remoti	of distant peoples
e gl'incogniti ancora a me son noti.	and those who are unknown are known to me.
Coi vili son asiatico,	With the lowly, I am Asian,
Coi grandi sono italico.	With the great, I am Italian.
Nel spender sono inglese.	In expenses, I am English.
Son colle dame un paladin francese. ²⁰	With the ladies, I am a French conqueror.

Similarly, in Act 1 Scene 1 of *L'albergatrice vivace* (The Vivacious Landlady; Table 1, source 13), Monsieur Floran describes himself as a 'pretty Paris toy', certain that 'this face, my complexion, my shape, this *tout ensemble François* [whole French package], has certainly captivated her [Barberina's] heart'.²¹ But even if Haydn's audience at Eszterháza was familiar with such stereotypes of French men, would Volpino's exclamation 'salamelica' have evoked the French 'salamelec' and brought these stereotypes to mind? If not, what resonances might Volpino's expression and the Turkish scene more generally have had for them?

The opera librettos from which I have just quoted are helpful sources for speculating about contemporary interpretations of Volpino in Haydn's setting of *Lo speziale*. In *L'albergatrice vivace*, Giuseppe Palomba puts 'salamelech' in the mouth of Monsieur Floran, a Frenchman impersonating his beloved Barberina's Turkish brother in order to scare away a rival for her affections. The libretto as a whole is striking in its multilingualism, with characters singing in French, German and Spanish in addition to Italian. Similarly, in Goldoni's *La conversazione*, Lucrezia uses the expression 'salamelecch' in the context of what John A. Rice has described as 'one of Goldoni's most relentlessly multilingual librettos. . . . It includes not only German but French, English, Latin and Turkish; not only standard Italian but Venetian, Bolognese, Neapolitan and Calabrese dialects'.²² In these cases as in *Lo speziale*, then, one might read the inclusion of 'salamelica' and related expressions as markers of characters' general worldliness and fluency in a variety of idioms, linguistic and/or musical.²³

Furthermore, while Volpino – much like Giacinto in *La conversazione* – uses his knowledge of the world to his advantage, Sempronio is at once fascinated by but deeply uninformed about the wider world. Fiction is thematized throughout *Lo speziale*, from the preposterous news items Sempronio shares at its outset – in China, a man from Moscow gave birth; in Persia, a sofa took a wife – to the Turkish travesty at its conclusion. Sempronio's avarice and professional incompetence predispose him to believe this exotic sham, as he dreams of becoming rich while curing the plague in Turkey. Sempronio is the target of ridicule in this scene, not the Turks,²⁴ and

20 Carlo Goldoni: *Drammi per musica* (7 August 2019). 'Incogniti' could also be translated as 'those who hide themselves'.

21 [Giuseppe Palomba,] *L'albergatrice vivace, a Comic Opera, as Performed at the King's Theatre, in the Haymarket, under the Direction of Signor Anfossi* (London: H. Reynell, 1783), 9.

22 John A. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 71.

23 The ungrammatical Italian of Volpino's aria may bring to mind Lingua Franca, a pidgin trade language used by various linguistic communities around the Mediterranean from the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century. As the late linguist Alan D. Corré noted in his extremely valuable 'cybergraph' on Lingua Franca, many opera librettos feature passages in Lingua Franca, including a particularly extensive one in Act 3 of Goldoni's comedy *L'impresario delle Smirne*, which Corré reproduces in its entirety. A comparison of this text to Volpino's aria quickly reveals that the latter is not in Lingua Franca – it lacks, notably, the easily recognizable verbs ending in -r, which Corré discusses in the introduction to his website. Furthermore, none of the words of Volpino's aria – including 'salamelica' or a construction similar to it – appears in Corré's glossary of Lingua Franca. See <https://minds.wisconsin.edu/bitstream/item/3920/go.html> (17 January 2019). See also the discussion and further examples of Lingua Franca in seventeenth-century French librettos in Thomas Betzwieser, *Exotismus und 'Türkenoper' in der französischen Musik des Ancien Régime: Studien zu einem ästhetischen Phänomen* (Laaber: Laaber, 1993), 121–140.

24 Head, 'Haydn's Exoticisms', 79, notes that here 'exoticism is a mechanism that highlights a character flaw': Sempronio's greed.



it is a given of the opera’s plot that he will ultimately be duped. *Lo speciale* parodies the hapless apothecary as a gossip-mongering *nouvelliste*, a character type lampooned in other eighteenth-century comic operas such as Charles-François Panard’s *Le Nouvelliste dupé* (The Duped Newsmonger, 1732; performed in Vienna in 1759).²⁵ Sempronio’s enthusiasm for Turkey specifically is rooted in his greed, and – like Panard’s *nouvelliste* Monsieur Timbré – his insatiable appetite for world news more generally blinds him to the trickery taking place right under his nose, as Head has pointed out.²⁶

I suggest, however, that Volpino’s ruse (which Mengone co-opts) owes its success in at least equal measure to Sempronio’s ignorance of the European cultural, theatrical and operatic conventions highlighted in the diegetic Turkish scene. The words ‘cantara’ and ‘ballara’ in the text of the aria strongly suggest that Volpino is not only referring to singing and dancing in Constantinople but demonstrating both for Sempronio. Green has noted that the libretto for Pallavicini and Fischietti’s 1755 setting of *Lo speciale* for Venice lists ten ‘ballerini’ – possibly the ‘finti Turchi’ who appeared alongside Volpino and who may have danced at Eszterháza as well.²⁷ The choreography may have incorporated exotic elements like those of Anthony L’Abbé’s *Turkish dance* of the early 1720s, which sets music from the Turkish entrée of André Campra’s *opéra-ballet L’Europe galante* (1697) and features movements that were not typical of contemporary French-style noble dancing, including flat-footed steps, successive brushes of the foot and successive hops, frequent circles of the leg, and balancing on one leg with the other lifted in the air.²⁸ Bernardo Bellotto’s famous engraving of the stage of Vienna’s Burgtheater at the premiere on 26 April 1758 of Joseph Starzer and Franz Hilverding’s pantomime ballet *Le Turc généreux* (The Magnanimous Turk), which includes male characters disguised as Turks at the back right of the stage balancing on one leg, reveals that at least this element of L’Abbé’s choreography was still current near the time of *Lo speciale*’s premiere at Eszterháza. Compan’s inclusion of ‘salamelec’ in a dictionary devoted to dance, furthermore, suggests that Volpino’s own performance may have included physical gestures, perhaps the ones described by Grécourt in Table 1, source 11:

La tête on doit courber jusqu’au nombril,
Rabattre en arc les mains sur la poitrine,
Se reculer, s’avancer à propos,
Et cætera

One must bow one’s head all the way to one’s navel,
Draw the hands in an arc onto the chest,
Step back, step forward,
Et cætera

As Sempronio witnessed the Turkish scene along with the Esterházy and their guests, only the apothecary could have been insensible to the conventions it referred to – and subverted by having a soprano sing the part of the ‘Turk’ during a century in which masculinity became an integral aspect of his operatic representation.²⁹ Turkish costumes were popular at carnivals, masquerades and fancy-dress parties throughout Europe in the eighteenth century.³⁰ Disguises and deceit, moreover, were recurring features not only of comic operas in

25 See Brown, review of *Haydn’s Jews*, 565. For more on *nouvellistes* in eighteenth-century France see Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

26 Head, ‘Haydn’s Exoticisms’, 77.

27 Green, *Power and Patriarchy*, 209, note 102.

28 See Linda J. Tomko, ‘Framing Turkish Dances’, *Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography* 36/1–2 (2011), 131–159. The contredanse ‘La salamelec’, published in Munich in 1718 but choreographed by Dubreuil for the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, also features hops combined with turns: see Françoise Dartois-Lapeyre, ‘Turcs et turqueries dans les “représentations en musique” (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)’, in *Turcs et turqueries (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Presse de l’université Paris–Sorbonne, 2009), 186–187.

29 Wolff explores this trend throughout *The Singing Turk*. Clark and Green have each addressed issues of gender and class raised by Volpino’s casting at Eszterháza as a trouser role because of personnel limitations.

30 See Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress in Eighteenth-Century Europe, 1715–1789* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), especially 263–271.



general, but of operas on Turkish subjects and scenes with Turkish themes in particular.³¹ These extend back to the ceremony concluding Molière and Jean-Baptiste Lully's *comédie-ballet Le bourgeois gentilhomme* (The Would-Be Gentleman, 1670), in which Cléonte disguises himself as the son of the Grand Turk in order to trick Monsieur Jourdain into giving him his daughter in marriage. Cléonte then proceeds to 'ennoble' Jourdain to the fictitious Turkish rank of 'mamamouchi', playing up to his desire for status and uttering 'sal-amalequi' in the process – a parallel that is particularly noteworthy given Goldoni's long-standing reverence for the works of Molière, upon which he based his own reform of Italian comedy.

Turkish themes continued to be popular, especially in French plays, operas and ballets (well-known examples include Hilverding and Starzer's previously mentioned *Le Turc généreux* as well as Christoph Willibald von Gluck's *Le Cadi dupé* (The Duped Judge, 1761) and *La Rencontre imprévue* (The Unexpected Meeting, 1764)), some of which shared the stage of the Burgtheater in Vienna with Italian and German offerings, especially in the wake of the fire that destroyed the Kärntnertheater in 1761.³² As Bruce Alan Brown has documented, French theatre already had a long tradition in Vienna by the later eighteenth century, and the diversity of linguistic, national and generic offerings in the Habsburg capital meant that spectators often 'perceived resonances with French stage pieces regardless of whether they were real or intentional'.³³ He notes that in his *Briefe über die wienerische Schaubühne* (Letters on the Viennese Stage, 1767–1768), for instance, Joseph von Sonnenfels, a jurist, journalist and court official, commented explicitly on the similarity between the narratives of Pietro Chiari and Baldassarre Galuppi's opera buffa *Il marchese villano* (The Boorish Marquis, 1762) and *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*.

Such parallels would hardly have escaped the Esterházy's or their guests: they patronized French theatre and Italian opera through attendance at public and private performances in Vienna and elsewhere, and in the case of the Esterházy's, through their extensive music collection as well.³⁴ Of particular note in their private library are numerous operas and ballets on Turkish subjects. As the primary original audience for Haydn's *Lo speziale*, their acquaintance with theatrical *turquerie* can thus hardly be questioned. Just as only Monsieur Jourdain could mistake disguised Frenchmen for actual Turks – and representation for reality in *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* – only someone as uncultured as Sempronio could fail to recognize the similarly diegetic fiction acted out by Volpino, which indirectly praised Haydn's audience for its own cultivation and cosmopolitanism.

We may never know with certainty how Goldoni's libretto for *Lo speziale* made it into Haydn's hands or why a piece originally composed for a bourgeois Italian audience appealed to Prince Esterházy. The Prince's selection of librettos for Haydn to set – most likely in consultation with the composer and possibly with others in his musical establishment – undoubtedly depended on several factors, including personnel, cost and availability of staging materials, and personal taste. The choice to inaugurate his opera house with a *dramma giocoso* established Prince Esterházy as a patron who shared the fashionable modern taste for Italian comic opera evident in Vienna's court theatres as well as in public theatres throughout Europe. Significantly, the Turkish scene near the conclusion of *Lo speziale* emphasized the uniqueness of the specific location of the

31 Wolff, *The Singing Turk* discusses the theme of Ottoman disguises in several eighteenth-century operas.

32 See Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); and Bruce Alan Brown, 'French Theater and Italian Opera in Eighteenth-Century Vienna: Continuities, Cosmopolitanism, and Criticism', in *D'une scène à l'autre: l'opéra italien en Europe*, two volumes, ed. Damien Colas and Alessandro Di Profio (Wavre: Mardaga, 2009), volume 2: *La musique à l'épreuve du théâtre*, 153–164. See also Betzwieser, *Exotismus und Türkenoper*.

33 Brown, 'French Theater and Italian Opera', 164.

34 Boniface Charles Champée twice made an inventory of Prince Paul Anton Esterházy's music library – in 1756 and again in 1759 – and his reconstructed catalogues are reproduced in János Harich, 'Inventare der Esterházy-Hofmusikkapelle in Eisenstadt', *Haydn-Jahrbuch* 9 (1975), 5–125. As Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna*, 94, has summarized, 'in addition to the many acquisitions from his travels abroad, the Prince's library contained the music to virtually every Italian opera, opéra-comique, and ballet given in Vienna during the preceding decade and a half – clearly the result of some sort of standing arrangement'.



new theatre while simultaneously claiming its place on a broader European stage. The mixing of references in Volpino's aria reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the area surrounding Eszterháza, not least because of its proximity to the border between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, which had shifted relentlessly over the preceding centuries. In 1768, the outbreak of the Russo-Ottoman war ensured that the Turks were once again of central political and cultural interest across Europe, reflected in the number of operas on Turkish themes created during the war years (1768–1774).³⁵ A comedy whose denouement occurs through a Turkish scene was thus a perfect choice for the inauguration of the opera house at Eszterháza: it spoke to current affairs while drawing on a traditional operatic theme, and it alluded to the multicultural contact zone in which the theatre was located while drawing on conventions of Turkish operatic representation that were popular and familiar throughout Europe.

35 For a discussion of these wartime operas see Wolff, *The Singing Turk*, 128–145.